

# Virginia Department of Historic Resources

## PIF Resource Information Sheet

This information sheet is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the necessary data to be able to evaluate the significance of the property for possible listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This is not a formal nomination, but a necessary step in determining whether or not the property could be considered eligible for listing. Please take the time to fill in as many fields as possible. A greater number of completed fields will result in a more timely and accurate assessment. Staff assistance is available to answer any questions you have in regards to this form.

<b>General Property Information</b>	For Staff Use Only DHR ID #: 222-5001
Property Name(s): <u>Byars House "Woodburn"</u>	
Property Date(s): <u>Ca. 1845</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Circa <input type="checkbox"/> Pre <input type="checkbox"/> Post             Open to Public? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Limited <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Property Address: <u>508 Blue Hills Dr.</u> City: <u>Glade Spring</u> Zip: <u>24340</u>	
County or Ind. City: <u>Washington /Town of Glade Spring</u> USGS Quad(s): <u>Glade Spring</u>	

<b>Physical Character of General Surroundings</b>
Acreage: <u>.992</u> Setting (choose one): <input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Corridor
Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features: Located on the edge of the Town of Glade Spring, west of downtown, the house stands in an open lot, parcel no. 052A2-12-M, on the northeast corner of the intersection of Route T-609 (Blue Hills Dr.) and Route T-1309 (Crescent Dr.), with the RR tracks across the street in front of the house. An excellent spring runs along the eastern margin of the property.
Secondary Resource Description: There are three one-story brick dependencies still standing: a springhouse at the rear of the parcel, north of the house; a former smokehouse and a building of unknown function on the west side of the house. All are constructed of hand-made bricks. The tiny springhouse has a poured concrete replacement foundation and the exterior brick walls have been mostly repointed with gray Portland-cement mortar. The roof, which has an overhanging extension to the south, has also been replaced to match the new green roof of the house. The elongated outbuilding, of unknown function, is constructed of neatly laid (5-course) American bond and has a gable roof clad with sheet metal, plywood-clad gable ends, and a batten door on the north end of the building. Window openings on the long side elevations have been infilled with brick. The smokehouse, which, like the main house and other dependencies, suffered greatly from neglect by previous owners, has a roughly square footprint and diamond-shaped vents on the east and west side elevations. Its brickwork closely resembles that of the main house and adjacent outbuilding, suggesting they were all built about the same time, by the same hands.
Ownership Category: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Local <input type="checkbox"/> Public-State <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal

<b>Individual Resource Information</b>
What was the historical use of this resource? Examples include: Dwelling, Grist Mill, Bridge, Store, Tobacco Barn, etc... <u>Single Dwelling</u>
What is the current use? (if other than the historical use) <u>Single Dwelling</u>
Architectural style or elements of styles: <u>Greek Revival</u>
Architect, builder, or original owner: <u>William Byars, original owner; John Ragsdale, (alleged) builder</u>
# of stories <u>2</u> Condition: <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Rebuilt <input type="checkbox"/> Renovated
Are there any known threats to this property? <u>None known</u>

### Resource Component Information

Please answer the following questions regarding the individual components of the resource. If the component does not exist, answer "n/a." If you feel uncomfortable in answering the question, please leave the space blank. Photographs of the features can also help our staff identify specific feature components. Usually, priority is given to describing features on the primary (front) facade of the structure.

**Foundation:**

Continuous limestone ashlar

**Structure:**

Stretcher-bond brick (front) and (five-course) American-bond brick (side & rear elevations)

**Walls:**

Exposed brick

**Windows: Have any windows been replaced? No.**

The original 8/8 double-hung wood sash survive intact.

**Porch:**

Front porch *was* a one-story, full-width, deck-roofed structure with square, bracketed wooden columns. It was badly deteriorated when removed. The porch deck and flooring have been replaced.

**Roof:** Describe the roof, listing the shape and the covering material.

The non-original V-crimp sheet-metal roofing seen in earlier photos was replaced with modern metal roof circa 2006.

**Chimney(s):**

Three brick, semi-exterior end chimneys (main block and one-story rear ell); two brick central interior chimneys in two-story rear ell.

### Architectural Description of Individual Resource: *(Please describe architectural patterns, types, features, additions, remodelings, or other alterations. A sketch of the current floor plan would be appreciated)*

The overall plan of the Byars House, locally known as Woodburn, is a T-shape, consisting of a two-story, three-bay, single-pile, side-gable-roofed main block facing south; a two-story rear ell with two-bays on each side and a low-med-pitch gable roof pierced by two large, brick chimneys, set side-by-side near the center of the ell. The one-story, full-width front porch with deck roof is gone, leaving a ghost where its roof, floor, and pilasters (one at each end) had been. The ell also once had a one-story, full-width porch running along its west side, and still has entrances to both the first and second floor levels, also on the west side. A small, one-story, gable-roofed kitchen is connected to the rear of the ell by a frame hyphen. The kitchen appears to have burned and been rebuilt from about four feet up during the late 19th century, using lighter-colored bricks and tall, slender two-over-two sash windows. The older, darker bricks around the lower portion closely match the main house bricks. The kitchen entrance is on the west side, although there is another entrance inside the hyphen.

The entire house is underlain by a neat limestone ashlar foundation that can scarcely be seen above ground surface. The main block has large, 8-over-8, double-hung sash on its front and rear, and on both sides of the ell. Much of the glass was been broken out in 2005, before repairs were made. The rear elevation of ell has an original, 6-over-6 window on the first floor and a small, boarded-up opening at the attic level. All of the window openings have prominent but plain wood lintels and sills except for those on the primary facade, which have Greek-key-motif dog ears derived from Asher Benjamin books. The front 1<sup>st</sup>- and 2nd-floor entrances have wide, molded trim with Greek crossettes, sidelights, and transom lights, and single-leaf doors. The first-floor front entrance has a fashionable Victorian-era screen door. At each end of the front wing are semi-exterior brick chimneys. The only windows in the main block's two end (side) elevations are small, square garret windows flanking the chimney stacks. Along the eaves of the entire house are plain entablatures and hidden gutters within. The brickwork of the house is excellent for the period, featuring uniform, smooth-textured bricks and overhand-struck joints, all of which was red-washed and the joints penciled.

The interior of the house is typical for its time and place, with a single-pile center-passage plan and plain woodwork consistent with the vernacular Greek Revival tradition. The central main staircase has slender turned balusters, and the stringer is decorated with jig-sawn scrolls having acorn-shaped drop pendants. Each fireplace is fitted with common Greek Revival mantels, the formal room mantels having round colonettes and less formal room mantels having squared pilasters. Window and door trim consists of symmetrical moldings and turned corner blocks.

## Significance Statement:

Woodburn is a moderately rare surviving high-style Greek Revival mansion that maintains excellent integrity in spite of having fallen into poor condition prior to 2006. Its brickwork and exterior woodwork are rank among the best in the region. In terms of design and construction, Woodburn is very similar to the Preston House in nearby Smyth County (DHR 086-0003), although the latter house is much larger. A notable attribute of the construction of these two houses is the exemplary neat and plain brickwork, for which all brickmasons of the period strived. This involved state-of-the-art hand-manufacture and firing of the bricks on the premises, as well as early use of stretcher bond on the main facade. Stretcher bond would supplant Flemish bond on many upscale brick buildings in the region beginning in the early 1840s. The preferred local method for ensuring the hidden strength of the stretcher bond wall, demonstrated at Woodburn, involved the use of specially-molded square bricks. [M. Pulice survey, 2005 – present.]

Woodburn is sited on a 2,000-plus acre tract first acquired by John Beattie in 1783. Beattie deeded the eastern section of the tract to his son David in 1786. David Beattie, in turn, sold the land to his cousin William B. Byars, the son of Col. William Byars, for \$5,000 in 1843. Col. Byars lived at Brook Hall [DHR 095-0004], and reportedly had houses built for several of his children, including the remarkable Cave Springs [DHR 095-0205] for his son John around the same time Woodburn was erected. Local tradition holds that by the mid 1850s, Col. Byars had Woodburn built for his son William. Col. Byars released William from at least \$10,000 in debts in his 1858 will, which may have included the cost of the Woodburn parcel and construction of the house. [RamblingRoots.com, “Woodburn” page.]

Reportedly, the house was constructed by John Ragsdale, though the source of this information is unclear. There is no Ragsdale listed among Washington, Russell, or Smyth County building tradesmen in the 1850 census.

In 1842, William Byars and Sarah Taylor married, but they would have no children of their own. Much later, they adopted William Byars Cobbs, the son of Sarah's niece Louisa Taylor who spent her childhood at Woodburn. In his 1887 will, William Byars bequeathed his estate, including Woodburn, to William Byars Cobbs. Cobbs died in 1897, but his wife and daughter, Augusta and Marion, continued to reside at Woodburn. In 1920 the house with 40 acres was purchased by Samuel W. Keys, a banker in Glade Spring. The property then changed hands several times after the Keys' death in 1934. [RamblingRoots.com, “Woodburn” page.]

By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the house and outbuildings had been left vacant and neglected and fell into severe disrepair. Finally, about 2005, Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Cooley purchased and began rehabilitating the buildings, effectively saving them from demolition by neglect. Today the house is in good condition and remains a highly visible, revered local historic landmark.

Note: RamblingRoots.com, the primary source of the historical data above, is a privately hosted website dedicated to the history of Washington County.

**Legal Owner(s) of the Property** (For more than one owner, please use a separate sheet.)Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Dr. ☐  
Miss ☐ Ms. ☐ Hon. ☐

WILLIAM TRACY SR &amp; MARIE R. COOLEY

n/a

6022 66<sup>th</sup> St. Circle E.

Palmetto

FL

34221

(Address)

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

billsarasota@aol.com

941-284-3604

(Email Address)

(Daytime telephone including area code)

Owner's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 1/15/2013

**•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••**

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone: ( )

**Applicant Information** (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)Mr. ☒ Mrs. ☐ Dr. ☐  
Miss ☐ Ms. ☐ Hon. ☐

Mike Pulice

DHR

962 Kime Lane

Salem

VA

24153

(Address)

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

michael.pulice@dhr.virginia.gov

54-387-5443

(Email Address)

(Daytime telephone including area code)

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notification**

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the department to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Dr. ☐  
Miss ☐ Ms. ☒ Hon. ☐

Nadine Culberson

County Administrator

Washington County

1 Government Center Place, Suite A

(Locality)

(Address)

Abingdon

VA

24210

(276) 525-1300

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

(Daytime telephone including area code)

Please use the following space to explain why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.

Would you be interested in the State and/or the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes ☐ No ☐Would you be interested in the easement program? Yes ☐ No ☐